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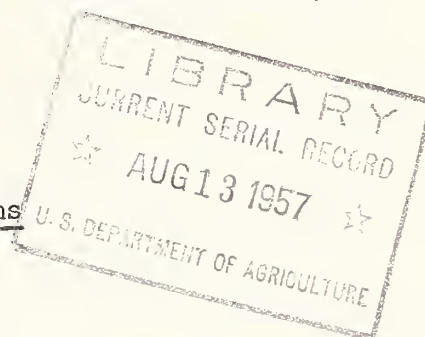
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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
Agricultural Marketing Service  
Washington 25, D. C.

AMS INSTRUCTION No. 310-1

ACTION BY: All Employees

Classification of Positions



I PURPOSE

The purpose of this Instruction is to outline the policies and responsibilities of classification officers, supervisors, and employees concerning the preparation of position descriptions for classification of Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) positions.

II GENERAL

The Classification Act authorizes and requires the various departments and agencies to classify positions on the basis of "equal pay for substantially equal work," subject to postaudit by the Civil Service Commission. Final classification of positions is determined by an evaluation of (1) facts concerning kind of work, level of responsibility, and knowledge requirements as stated in the position description or other source data; (2) the application of the U. S. Civil Service class specifications or statements of classification standards; and (3) standards developed by AMS or the Department.

III RESPONSIBILITIES OF PERSONNEL OFFICES 1/

A Personnel offices, through individuals to whom classification authority has been delegated, are responsible for:

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1/ As used in this Instruction the term "personnel office" refers to the Personnel Division in Washington, D. C., or the personnel branch of the area administrative division, depending upon which office exercises personnel jurisdiction over the employee concerned.

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DISTRIBUTION: To all organizational units and offices  
(Washington and field) of the Department  
conducting functions which were made a part  
of AMS under Secretary's Memorandum  
No. 1320 and its supplements.

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1 Advising supervisors and employees

a As to specific information needed for classification purposes;

b On the interpretation of published classification specifications and statements of classification standards;

c Of job description information requirements for classification and internal management purposes; and

d Of those classification factors pertinent to their respective positions in order to eliminate nonessential information.

2 Evaluating reported facts and information received from supervisors and employees, and classifying positions to their proper grade, title, and series.

3 Requesting periodic certification from employees and supervisors as to the accuracy and currency of position descriptions on record as they may determine to be essential.

IV RESPONSIBILITIES OF SUPERVISORS

Supervisors are responsible for:

A Initiating requests for the establishment of positions for personnel who report to them, when the positions are necessary to discharge their assigned responsibilities within the availability of manpower and funds;

B Planning and making work assignments within the above limitations;

C Reviewing position descriptions prepared by the employee actually performing the duties of the position and indicating their agreement as to accuracy, or noting omissions and inaccuracies;

D Preparing position descriptions for proposed vacant positions prior to initiating employment action;

E Reviewing official position descriptions as necessary but at least annually to assist in controlling internal organization and work assignments and to assure the currency and accuracy of such descriptions; and

F Assuring that new position descriptions are submitted whenever review indicates that revised position descriptions are necessary.

#### V RESPONSIBILITIES AND RIGHTS OF EMPLOYEES

A Employees are responsible for:

1 Preparing or working with their supervisors in preparing statements of their duties and responsibilities in accordance with this Instruction.

2 Stating facts as they know them in preparing such statements or in answering inquiries as to the currency and accuracy of their official position descriptions.

B Employees are entitled to review their official position descriptions, discuss them with their immediate supervisors and, if necessary, with their division administrative officials or their personnel office. Employees may appeal classification decisions on their positions to their supervisors, to their personnel office, to the Department Office of Personnel, or direct to the U. S. Civil Service Commission.

#### VI PROCEDURE

A Preparation of Position Description. Position descriptions shall be prepared by supervisors and employees in accordance with the format of Guide for Writing Position Descriptions, SF-75A. Items I through V of this Guide should be complied with for all positions GS-7 and above. Below GS-7, only items I, III, and V need be complied with unless the classification information on items II and IV is specifically requested by the employee's personnel office. Item VI is optional in all instances but may be used if necessary. Position descriptions

should include only essential information and usually should not exceed two or three pages in length.

B Number of Copies and Distribution. The number of copies to be submitted according to the types shown below, for both new and revised positions, and the distribution to be made by the appropriate personnel office after classification action are as follows:

1 Key Washington Positions. Six copies, to be distributed as follows: One copy to the Department Office of Personnel; one copy to the employee; one copy to the employee's official personnel folder; one copy to the division's administrative officer; and two copies to remain with the Personnel Division (classification office).

2 Non-Key Washington Positions. Five copies, to be distributed as in 1 above, except the copy for the Office of Personnel need not be prepared or submitted.

3 Key Field Positions. Seven copies, to be distributed as follows: One copy to the Department Office of Personnel; one copy to the employee; one copy to the employee's official personnel folder; one copy to the division's administrative officer; one copy to the field officer-in-charge 2/; one copy to the classification officer of the area administrative division; and one copy to the classification officer, Personnel Division.

4 Non-Key Field Positions. Six copies, to be distributed as outlined in subparagraph 3 immediately above, except the copy for the Office of Personnel need not be prepared or submitted.


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2/ As used herein the term "field officer-in-charge" includes State Statisticians; Chairmen, Consolidated Livestock Offices; District Supervisors (Tobacco, and Fruit and Vegetable Divisions); Area Managers (Cotton Division); Area Supervisors (Dairy and Poultry Divisions); Chiefs of Laboratories; etc.



VII DEFINITION OF KEY POSITIONS

For purposes of this Instruction, a key position refers to any position above GS-13 and to a position at any grade level with responsibility for serving as head of a unit, section, branch, or division, when such position is not covered by published class specifications. (This information is available from the classification officer.) Heads of units, sections, branches, or divisions up to and including GS-13 may be classified under delegated authority, but one copy of such position description should be immediately submitted to the Department Office of Personnel through the AMS Personnel Division for postaudit review. (See 8 AR, Chap. 6.)

  
Henry G. Herrell  
Assistant Administrator for Management

